

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 473.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1863.

PRICE 14d.

THE PAINS AND MITIGATIONS OF POLISHED LIFE

A CERTAIN Government was once described as a Despotism tempered by Epigrams, and Good Society may be similarly characterised as a Tyranny mitigated by Wives. I do not mean to contend that wives in the 'best circles' are mitigations in other respects, for I am well aware that they are considered, by many husbands, in a very opposite light. It is with the vulgar only that the wife is held to 'halve a man's sorrows and double his joys;' while with persons of fashion like ourselves, she has, perhaps, precisely the reverse effect. But let us give the enchantress (for such she was at one time) her just due. Could we go about in a close carriage from three till six committing morning-calls? Could we make small-talk, and smile, and smile, and smile, and be a social hypocrite by daylight, in a hundred different drawing-rooms every year? Could our lips frame such fairy falsehoods as the following? 'What an age, it seems, my dear Lady Beeswax, since we met!'—'How charmingly well you're looking!'—'We were so very sorry that we could not come to you on the 6th; if it had but happened that we had been engaged elsewhere, I do believe that we should have been very wicked, and ran away to you instead: but, alas! we had people to dinner at home.'—'The fact is, our horses have been ill, and we have been calling on nobody; I feel positively ashamed at shewing my face anywhere, but I know with an *old friend* like you, no apology is necessary. How is your pretty parrot? Poll! Poll! Poll!'

Reader of the male sex, could you make such remarks as these—not once, nor twice, nor thrice—but ever so many times *per diem* every season? You *know* you couldn't. You have neither the talent nor the immoral courage for it. Truth—vulgar truth—would find its way to your lips, in spite of your utmost efforts, and you would say something rude and natural. It is true that there are bachelors in Good Society ('And a great many more than there ought to be,' says Lady FitzRabbets), but when they 'call,' they are silent; when they venture, I say, to do more than leave their cards at the door, or their names in the visitors-book, they are for the most part speechless. They have looked out for the very finest afternoon, and made up their minds that the people would not be at home, and now that they find

themselves mistaken, they are in a state of mental collapse. They hold the rim of their hats firmly in both their hands, and sit listening with eager ears for the next ring at the front-door bell. They are in the chamber of torture; there is no chloroform to be procured, and no one to bear the pain vicariously for them; for they have no wife.

'Oh, blessings on her frosty pow,' say I, 'who saves us these inflictions!' For it does not signify in the least how old she is. One's wife may be three-score-years-and-ten, or even twenty, and yet 'call.'

When a man is married, he becomes, singularly enough, a free man, not only in this respect, but in many others. 'The precarious state of his dear wife's health' is one of the greatest social blessings to him conceivable. He evades the most dreadful civilities upon this tender plea. Nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to have accepted Borem's (Q.C.) invitation to dinner, but the state of his wife's health is, unhappily, such that unremitting attention for the present is necessary. Her indisposition, however, is not so severe as to preclude her going to the Opera the same night with some musical friends, and the husband (who does not know B flat from C sharp) takes his rubber at the club. All invitations 'to come in the evening' are rendered innocuous by this charming arrangement; the night-air, says her medical man, is by all means to be avoided by our Clementina, while, as for leaving the dear girl alone, and coming out one's self, we are sure that Lady Negus would be the *very last person* to advise any such arrangement. Friends in Yorkshire of a sombre cast, but whom it is desirable to conciliate, request our presence for six weeks in the summer at Drearygloom Castle; our reply is, that we had almost expected (from their known habits of hospitality) this delightful invitation, and yet we had hoped that it would not have arrived, since we are compelled to refuse it; for the fact is that Clementina is ordered to Cornwall. Dr Pecheblum has pronounced the air of the Land's End to be indispensable to our beloved invalid. How we wish that Drearygloom was but in the neighbourhood of Penzance!

The present writer was once a witness to a verbal contention between two divines of eminence as to whether one might say 'Not at home' when one *was* at home, without incurring the guilt of falsification. It took place before the ladies at the dinner-table, and therefore the language of the combatants was less

unmeasured than is apt to be the case in moral discussions; the steam, however, was at high-pressure, and very anxious to escape.

'There is no use in disputing further, sir,' observed A; 'a man of *principle* would scorn to behave as you suggest; he would give his servant orders to tell the truth—that he was "particularly engaged."

'Nay, sir,' replied B; 'that might do in London; but if your wife, for instance, does us the honour of calling on us in the *country*, and has driven seven miles to do it, would she be satisfied, when turned away from the door by the information that we were "particularly engaged?"

'You could mention exactly what you were doing,' quoth A majestically.

B was driven by opposition into vulgarity. 'Supposing, then, that I was washing my feet'—

A peal of laughter, such as is rarely heard in the society of canons and archdeacons, here, fortunately, put a stop to further discussion. The ladies rose, and I am not the man to betray the secrets of the ante-drawing-room period.

Now, one's wife—Heaven forgive her—is never troubled with these delicate casuistic questions. She writes her regrets that a previous engagement prevents our having the pleasure, &c., &c., exactly as if it did; in the same microscopic, slanting handwriting in which she would have stated the greatest moral truth. On those perplexing occasions on which one gets two invitations for the same day, and the less pleasant one first, the solution may be safely left in Clementina's hands. 'Unfortunately,' she writes, 'just before your delightful invitation arrived, we accepted another for the very same date. Ah, how we shall think of you and of your charming party, when we are, alas! elsewhere, for how is it (as my husband and I are always saying) that you manage to pick up all the nicest people that are to be found?'

It is the lack of a wife—the want of a shield to protect them against dreadful civilities—which drives so many young men out of the drawing-room into the stable; they become 'horsey' or 'doggy' in despair, and from a consciousness that they are unable to comply with the exactions of Fashion. For my part, I agree with a certain living author, that 'the horse is an awful animal,' and I abhor the smell of leather; yet, rather than stand for four hours on a July night in a corner of Lord Cramfokes's *salons*, I would rather sit in his saddle-room, and smoke a short pipe with his groom. It may be small infliction to those who have their position in 'Society' to win, and to whom crowded rooms, and big names mispronounced at the doorway, are a novelty, but to myself, I honestly confess, such entertainments are intolerable. The situation is uncomfortable, the atmosphere is unhealthy, and the conversation is idiotic. If you happen to observe any two young men who emerge together from a scene of this sort about midnight, you will read in their countenances, as they light their cigars on the doorstep, an expression of enfranchisement which it is impossible to mistake. Before retiring to rest, they are going to look in at their Club—that haven for which they have sighed these two hours, and whither dreadful civilities cannot pursue them; for one's house is only one's Castle, liable to sack and siege; but one's Club is enchanted ground, whereon not even far-spreading crinoline dares impinge, and wherein you may take your gloves off and yawn to your heart's content.

What a curious system of *taboo* we live under! How odd it is that one should be forbidden to yawn! This cannot be an offence against the laws of nature. Hodge in the turnip-field is surely unconscious of crime when he yawns in the presence of the opposite sex, who are turnip-hoeing also. It is doubtful whether he even knows that it is wrong to whistle. If you gave him Seltzer Water, he would infallibly reject what he could of it, with the most obvious

symptoms of apprehension and distaste. An American gentleman, by this time, doubtless, a major-general, but at one period a backwoodsman in humble circumstances, has made printed confession, that the effect of his first bottle of soda-water was to terrify him with the notion that he was about to lose an important feature; his words are: 'It fairly fetched my breath away when it went down; and not only that, let me tell you, but presently, it came up again a-fizzing and a-biling ready to blow my nose off.' Considering with what impunity we ourselves imbibe this liquid, these phenomena are surely interesting. The natural man seems to be in some respects even physically inferior to the man of civilisation; for, perceive him with fish before him, and only a fork to eat it with, as was the case with all of us a year or two ago, before those silver knives came into fashion, which, in some cases, reappear with the dessert. Mark him, I say, with the slice of infirm turbot, or (still more strikingly) with a red mullet upon his plate in its paper cover. He glances furtively around him, and perceiving his neighbours each with a piece of bread in his left hand, he essays to make use of the same inefficient means to eliminate his food. It is worse than eating with chop-sticks. He endeavours in vain to satisfy his hunger, retarded not only by the inefficiency of his implements, but by the distressing circumstance that every now and then he forgets the peculiar mission of the piece of bread, and bolts it. The notion of the poor savage has hitherto been that bread is useful as food only, and in the present case the temptation so to treat it is increased by the sauce in which he has been certain to immerse it. A man with thirty thousand a year may use a steel knife with salmon if he pleases.* And so also, singularly enough, may one whose income is but thirty pounds sterling. But between those poles lie all degrees of men in chains and fetters of custom.

Let us conclude with a terrible example of this state of slavery. A soldier-friend of ours, from India, where pale ale, as everybody knows, is the elixir of life, chanced to dine, immediately after his return to England, in Belgrave Square. The dinner was in accordance with the situation—that is to say, exceedingly good. Every wine that the tongue of man pronounces with rapture was there in profusion, besides several German ones, whose titles our friend could not pronounce; but in vain did he strain his eyes towards the sparkling sideboard for an appearance of bottled Beer. There were tankards, indeed, or silver something which mocked the lips by suggesting the idea of tankards; but their polished rims were crowned with none of that creamy froth, compared to which the foam of champagne is as moonlight unto sunlight. As to asking the butler for his favourite liquor, our friend would as soon have thought of asking him for tripe, for that solemn dignitary was aristocratic in the very highest degree, more noble-looking than the host—albeit he was a peer of the realm, with blood as blue as the bag which maternal care applied to our infant nose when stung by wasps—and more venerable in mien than the bishop himself who had blessed the repast at its commencement. No, the butler would never do; consumed by the desire for pale ale as our friend was, and rendered bold by want, like a wolf in winter, even the Indian hero hesitated to address so great a man upon so low a theme. But among the flock of canary-coloured footmen, who have an allowance for powder, and spend it in flour, there was one less stupendous and haughty than his fellows, in whose countenance the unhappy guest seemed to read no little human feeling. While affecting, therefore, to help himself to some exquisite dainty that this man

* He may put that knife in his mouth without being anything worse than 'eccentric.'

was offering to him, our friend whispered hastily: 'Pale ale, please.'

The canary-coloured footman could not believe his ears; placing his artificially aged head upon one side, in the too intelligent fashion of the bird whose plumage he had borrowed, he said: 'I beg your pardon, sir: I did not catch what you said.'

Our oriental friend had been accustomed to be obeyed, and that instantly. 'Pale ale,' observed he, a little louder; and then added, *sotto voce*, some Indian word which might mean, 'you ludicrously attired and grimacing idiot.' The canaried one, imagining that this unheard end of the sentence must be very important, again put himself in the attitude of obtrusive attention, and every eye at table became involuntarily directed to himself and my unhappy friend.

'Beer!' exclaimed the Indian hero in a voice that has been often heard above the din of battle, and the medals upon his manly chest clashed together as he spoke in rage.

'Conversation,' observed he, in narrating to me this hideous experience, 'entirely ceased after that fatal word. Even her ladyship, justly celebrated as she is at the head of a dinner-table, failed to lift it. Everybody waited until I should get that Beer. Johannsberg could have been procured by the gallon in that stately mansion, but of the simple liquid which I had demanded, there was not a pint in the house. I ought to have known better than to ask for it, but I had just returned from a land of liberty, which I hope was taken as my excuse. The canaries flocked together and chirped apart; then the butler was consulted, who had been staring right over his master's head in sublime indifference to the calamity which had befallen me. He gave some majestic order. I know he did, though I was ten seats away from him, and had my eyes fixed on my plate. It was one of those awful moments when, like a hare, one sees with the back of one's head. I was *clairvoyant* to everything that was done both in the room and out of it. I heard the area-gate 'go,' as some female servant rushed out with a can to the public-house; I know she had a can because it tinkled against the railings in her haste, and sounded as distinct amid the stillness of the table as if it had been Westminster chimes. . . . It came at last, but I had no desire for it then. It tasted to me very unlike pale ale. Perhaps the butler had ordered them to fetch some inferior article—that which is called "Two-penny." His lordship observed most good-naturedly: "Come, Sir William, you shall not have that all to yourself: I must take a little too. I am sorry to say that the good old fashion of beer-drinking is going out." But I am quite sure he didn't like it. I have gone through a good deal, but the whole thing forms one of the most dreadful experiences in my life. If I was Mr Thackeray, I would write a *Roundabout Paper* about it, that would move you to tears.'

'Yes,' said I, 'or if you were A. K. H. B., instead of being only A. K. C. B., you might write an essay "Concerning the asking for Beer at a Dinner-party in Belgrave Square."'

Since my friend is neither of those two famous personages, I have done it myself.

A 'GOOD PLAIN COOK' FOR THE ARMY.

If there is one personage more than another to whom the above culinary designation is applicable, it is Captain Grant of the Royal Artillery. This officer is a good plain cook, for he has been the means of giving roast and baked dinners to thousands of soldiers who used to sigh in vain for such a luxury. English taxpayers are hardly aware of the fact, that the troops always had their meat boiled, in barrack and in camp, until about the period of the Crimean war. No provision was made for roasting or baking;

and all the cooking arrangements were wasteful and slovenly. When a regiment is in barracks, the men are grouped into messes or parties, and the dinners for each mess are cooked in one place and at one time. Boiled meat (and the liquor resulting from the process) was their fare day after day; unless the soldiers, out of their poor pittance, contrived to club together, and have their meat baked over potatoes in some neighbouring baker's oven, a plan which the arrangements of some barracks occasionally permitted them to adopt. The official mind had not risen to the dignity of roast-beef for the army. Many officers, however, desired to see their men better provided for; they knew that boiling is not the best mode of developing the nutritious qualities of meat; and they felt convinced that, without a farthing more expense, mess-dinners might be better managed than they were. Among these officers was Captain Grant. He has for eight years been trying to obtain from the authorities some credit and some advantage for what he has effected; but red-tape has not done with the matter yet; and until a few more reams of paper have been covered with correspondence between various departments, commissions, and committees, he will probably have to wait, like many other useful inventors.

When the camp at Aldershot was first formed, Captain Grant devised a primitive but effective kind of camp-kitchen that could be constructed in any open spot. He first cut a trench in the ground, and placed over it a covering of thin iron plates, having a central hole in each plate large enough to receive an ordinary camp-kettle or cooking-pot. A chimney was formed at one end of the trough, by piling up sods or peats to the height of three feet; and at the other end of the trench was a fireplace. The meat was only boiled by this plan, it is true; but the troops had thus the means of obtaining a hot dinner every day, with a facility not possible on the older system. When the permanent barracks began to supersede the tents and huts at Aldershot, Captain Grant made such changes as would render his apparatus applicable as a permanent barrack-kitchen. He retained the trench-plan, and economised fuel in a remarkable degree by making the heat from the fireplace travel along the whole length of the trench before reaching the chimney. He also contrived a singular kind of closed oven, to be placed within the chimney itself, whereby the meat could be baked instead of boiled, or baked while other portions are being boiled, without using a single shovelful more of fuel. Such was the economy he introduced by successive improvements, that he made one halfpennyworth of coal suffice for a whole week for three meals a day to each soldier—coffee for breakfast, meat or soup for dinner, and tea in the evening. One cart of coals will cook a dinner for two hundred men—a fact that will probably surprise many a frugal housewife.

Military officers have not been slow to acknowledge how much better all this is than the old system for their men. Major-general Mansel, in September 1858, made a report to the War-office to the effect that Grant's apparatus had been found remarkably serviceable and economical at Shorncliffe camp, affording to the soldier the opportunity of baking and boiling at the same fire at the same time. Day after day, for several weeks together, three hundred and sixty pounds of coal sufficed to effect all the baking and boiling of meat, stewing of soup, steaming of potatoes, and boiling of water for coffee and tea for five hundred men; the provisions, if equally divided among all, giving a daily ration to each man of twelve ounces of baked or boiled meat, half a pint of soup, a pound and a half of potatoes, a pint and a half of coffee, and about the same quantity of tea. Since that time, the apparatus has been applied in various places, altered and improved in various ways from time to time—for it is not patented; and Captain

Grant has been anxious to adopt any suggestion that will render the working more efficacious. In whatever detailed form it may appear, his camp or barrack kitchen always consists essentially of a long horizontal chamber with a fire at one end and a vertical chimney at the other, holes in the iron cover of the chamber into which cooking-vessels may be placed, and a closed baking-oven in the middle of the chimney.

But this is by no means the most remarkable performance of Captain Grant as 'a good plain cook.' What will the reader think of cooking our dinner as we travel; of having our beef fizzing away, and our soup and potatoes bubbling, as they travel like ourselves, and all 'done to a turn' by the time the journey is finished? Captain Grant's *travelling-kitchen* or *cooking-wagon*, for the use of troops on the march, contains all the necessary apparatus for cooking eight hundred or more rations of meat and soup. The boiler and steamer for this purpose weigh about half a ton; and these, with the fireplace, are so arranged that the whole can be quickly transferred from one wagon to another in case of accidents. From two to four horses are sufficient to draw the wagon and apparatus, according to the nature of the ground. The ordinary Military Train wagons have spare room enough for a supply of compressed vegetables, rice, &c., and other articles necessary to the completeness of the kitchen. A larger kind, called the *hospital wagon*, is more complete in its fittings, having an oven for baking as well as boilers and steamers. When employed for hospital purposes, instead of the large boiler boiling all the meat, it serves as a reservoir of boiling water, while a number of smaller vessels, surrounding it as satellites, suffice for the treatment of the meat, soup, puddings, vegetables, pastry, rice, coffee, or tea.

It is exceedingly interesting to read of the doings of these travelling-kitchens, as described by officers who have every reason to be truthful in speaking of matters affecting the well-being of the troops under their command. On the 22d of August 1859, Major-general Dacres, commandant at Woolwich, took one thousand troops from Woolwich to Dartford, to make a trial of Grant's kitchens. The cooking commenced on the line of march at a quarter before nine in the morning; the troops arrived at Dartford Heath at a quarter past twelve; and by a quarter before one, the thousand rations were all hot and well cooked for the men's dinner. The fire had to be kept low on the march, in order that the dinner might not be ready for the men before the men were ready for the dinner. On the 3d of November in the same year, the Ordnance Select Committee at Woolwich made another experiment with this apparatus, to determine times, quantities, and qualities more minutely. Rations were provided for 438 men, consisting (besides bread) of beef, vegetables, meal, and barley. The beef was cut up into four-pound pieces, and placed in nets, each net labelled for one mess; the carrots and turnips were placed in similar nets, and labelled; the cabbages, onions, and parsley were washed and cut small; and all, with seventy-seven gallons of water, were placed in the boiler. The potatoes (a peck and a quarter for every twelve men) were placed in nets, and covered with cold water. All being thus far prepared, matters proceeded as follows: At half-past eight in the morning the fire was lighted; at half-past ten the troops set off on a march from Woolwich Artillery Barracks over Shooter's Hill, taking their kitchen-on-wheels with them. In twenty minutes they halted, and lit the fire of a second apparatus (of the hospital kind), destined for the reception of the potatoes. At a quarter past eleven, another halt was made; the carrots and turnips were taken out of their nets, well mashed, and returned to the boiler; the meat in the nets was taken out of the

boiler, and put into two kettles, leaving the soup in the boiler. On they marched again. At twelve o'clock the meat was returned to the boiler, and kept slowly boiling until the potatoes were done, which was effected in the hospital-wagon. By this time the troops had returned to barracks, where they dined on the beef, soup, and vegetables thus cooked during their march. The meal and barley appear to have been used for thickening the soup. The meat was in the ratio of three-quarters of a pound to each man; there was sixpennyworth of potatoes, carrots, turnips, onions, parsley, flour, and barley to each mess of twelve men; we may leave it to any expert market-woman to determine how much was obtainable at this cost. The hospital-wagon was in this experiment used with the battalion-wagon; but in hard field-service the men would dispense with some of these extras, and be glad to get a hot dinner on any terms.

On the 12th of July 1860, Major-general Dacres made another trial of the travelling-kitchen at Woolwich, which he described, in a letter to the quarter-master-general, as being thoroughly successful. Lieutenant-general Pennefather, in October 1861, prepared for the quarter-master-general an account of some marchings and campings at Aldershot, during which the kitchen-on-wheels came in for a large share of praise. He said: 'The great utility, comfort, and advantage to the soldier, in the case of the ambulating-boiler, was strongly exemplified on the morning of the march of the 20th regiment into Aldershot from Woolmer. The boiler was fitted and the fire prepared the evening previous, by the cook of the regiment. One man got up a little before three o'clock in the morning, and lighted the fire. At about half-past four, the men's breakfasts were being issued. Fifteen minutes after the final issue, the wagon was packed and ready for the march. On the other hand, the remaining regiments composing the column were disturbed at an early hour by their cooks endeavouring to prepare the men's coffee, with damp wood to light the fires, upon ground soddened by a heavy fall of dew on the previous night; while the men whose duty it was to carry the kettles were anxious to get them cleaned for carrying in the bags attached to the knapsacks. The saving of fuel was very great, the consumption per diem being at the rate of one pound and seven-eighths instead of three pounds of wood per man.' Here we are told of economy in time, economy in money, and greater comfort.

But as foreign service tests all our military arrangements more severely than home, it is satisfactory to know that the 'good plain cook' has been at work in China as well as in England. On the 25th of November 1861, the 67th Regiment of foot made trial of Captain Grant's travelling-kitchen, by order of Brigadier-general Staveley, commanding at Tientsin. Meat, vegetables, and meal, prepared in the usual way for five hundred men, were put into the boiler, the fuel was arranged, and at half-past eleven the fire was lighted. Off they started, troops and kitchen, for a march; and no doubt John Chinaman would have been a good deal surprised if he had known what all this meant. The regiment arrived at its halting-place about one o'clock; and in half an hour more, the savoury contents of the boiler were pronounced to be ready. The officers lunched, and the men dined, on the meat and soup thus prepared; and general encomiums were pronounced. The fuel used was marvellously small, only 120 pounds for 500 men's dinners. Colonel Thomas, of the 67th Regiment, who had the management of the affair, stated in his report that the troops, who had started on their march with a prejudice against the apparatus, changed their minds completely before the day was over. 'The ambulating-boiler,' he adds, 'having the advantage of allowing the

co
be
wa
a
br
all
lit
ver
tar
bri
for
int
thi
flo
by
In
Ser
sup
thr

OR,

ON
of t
the
Aar
into
listl
shak
you
'Q
amo
stro
'I
brok
reve
the
reve
'I
again
'D
you
char
night
My
readi
not f
ing o
'T
Mr G
with
'Y
let m
It is
make
'W
remor
night.
'Do
a son
absolu
o'clock
it will
'I
unclea
can w
our fo
'Ab
from t
'Bu

* The
an em
† That
unclean

cooking to be carried on during the march, would be a very great comfort to men on hard service; it would require the assistance of only one cook for a regiment; the usual orderlies being employed for bringing the fuel and water.*

The indefatigable Captain Grant, not content with all this, has advanced to the construction of *pontoon-kitchens*. The troops cook their dinner, then convert their boilers and kettles into a pontoon or military bridge, then cross a river, and then use their bridge to make their tea in. How this magic transformation is effected, we cannot describe without going into detail; but it is based on the fact, that a closed thin iron vessel, whether used for cooking or not, will float upon water; and that many such vessels, side by side, will support a boarded platform or raft. In August 1859, some of the Guards crossed the Serpentine in this way, four men standing on a raft supported by nine pontoon-kettles, bars being passed through the kettle-handles.

AARON AND ESTHER:*

OR, THREE DAYS OF RABBI NATHAN CLAUSENER'S LIFE.

L—TWO YOUNG JEWS.

ONE fine Friday afternoon in spring, Wolf Israel, son of the wealthy money-changer, Leib Israel, entered the office of Mr Gerson, a merchant, and asked for Aaron Jacobson, the head-clerk. On being shewn into a room at the back of the office, he found Aaron listless and unoccupied, resting from his duties. On shaking hands, Wolf Israel said to his friend: 'Are you not well?'

'Oh yes—quite well; but not having had my usual amount of sleep, I feel tired and worn out. I am not strong enough for such revels as we had last night.'

'Bah, you are stronger than I; you only want to be broken in. Revels! You do not mean to call it a revel because we heard music and had some wine in the woods? That is a very incomplete form of revelry!'

'I shall not want to complete it further; it is against my nature; I am sorry for it.'

'Do not say so! You are an excellent fellow when you have got half a bottle; the whole party was charmed with your song. We are to meet again to-night, and I have promised you will again join us. My carriage, with the two new horses, shall be in readiness for us just outside the town—for your sake, not for mine. I do not care whether I am seen driving on Sabbath or not.'

'To-night? No, thank you, I cannot. I dined with Mr Gerson last Friday night, and two Sabbath-nights without seeing my parents and my friends—no!'

'You are and will remain a child, it seems! But let me see. You really look ill. What is the matter? It is not the want of sleep alone, I am sure. Come, make a clear breast of it.'

'Wolf,' said Aaron with tears in his eyes, 'I feel remorse; I repent having eaten the beef-steak † last night.'

'Do you, my child? Well, it is a great sin; but I, a son of the nineteenth century, solemnly give you absolution. The carriage will be ready at eight o'clock, and this heavy crime having been removed, it will take us to the wood in less than half an hour.'

'I am thirty years old,' said Aaron, 'and nothing unclean had touched my lips until last night. Why can we not be merry without violating the customs of our forefathers?'

'Ah, nonsense! Can you not emancipate yourself from the old rabbis and their superstition?'

'But Moses?' said Aaron, with an anxious look.

'Bah! Moses himself was but a rabbi who has attained high honour by lying still so many hundred years, exactly as hock does. Upon my word, a capital idea! Well, do not be afraid; your hair need not stand on end. I had no malicious design; I bear no malice to Moses; and I promise you shall not be led to-night into eating beef-steak, or into any other such temptation.'

'When wine enters, reason leaves us,' replied Aaron; 'it is better to keep away. I feel since last night as though some misfortune were hanging over me. I will not challenge Heaven again. No, I thank you, Wolf, but I will keep Sabbath to-night.'

'I'll be hanged if I understand you; but if you won't come, you won't; I must be off to find another companion. Good-bye, rabbi.'

At Wolf's last words, a blush came over Aaron's cheeks; but, after the departure of his friend, he set himself steadily to work until it became almost dusk, when he dismissed the other clerks, shut up the office, and went home.

IL—EREF SCHABBAS. THE EVE OF THE SABBATH.

ON Aaron's return home, he found his mother at the Sabbath-table consecrating the lamp, stretching out her hands towards it, and saying the blessing.

'Have you been to synagogue to-night?' she asked, when she had finished her short prayer.

'No, dear mother, I but just now left the counting-house, and had no time even to dress. Has father returned?'

'No; but I think they are now about Bameh matlikin.* He will soon be home. I am going to have the supper brought up.'

Aaron hurried upstairs to dress, and had just returned to the room when his father entered.

'Good Schabbas,' said the father cheerfully.

'Good Schabbas,' replied both his wife and son, and the latter, covering his head, received the Sabbath blessing.

'It was a pleasure indeed to be at synagogue to-night,' said old Mr Jacobson. 'We had the new Hrason.† What a voice! It makes the heart leap with joy! My darling, I am hungry. Aaron, take your seat.'

'Thank you, father,' said Aaron, 'I will only see you make kiddusch.‡'

'Are you going away, Aaron? Are we to sup alone?'

'I am only going for half an hour to Rabbi Nathan's,' replied Aaron shyly.

'On Eref Schabbas you should remain with your parents. Aaron, you were not with us last Friday.'

'Let him go,' said the mother, with an arch smile.

The father caught the smile, and smiled himself, saying: 'Well, well—good Schabbas. My compliments to Rabbi Nathan.'

'And mine to his wife and daughter,' added the mother.

Rabbi Nathan Clausener, to whose house Aaron now bent his steps, was one of those men highly esteemed by the Jews, who devote their whole life to the study of the law and its voluminous commentaries. As his surname Clausener (from the Latin *clausa*) indicated, he was a stipendiary paid by the community, or out of some legacy, for closeting himself with the sacred books; and to the belief of many people, such a life of retirement and sanctity often leads to secret wisdom and secret power—a power to do good alone, to intercede with God for his people when threatened with his wrath, or left exposed to danger. So late as thirty or forty

* The above original story is from the pen of Mr Goldschmidt, an eminent Danish author.

† That is to say, meat not prepared by Jews, consequently unclean—'tereipho.'

* How is the Sabbath Light to be lighted? a small treatise, which is read on Friday evenings towards the close of the prayers.

† Reader.

‡ Bless the bread and wine.

years back, such a venerable white-bearded rabbi was, and even now in some places is, to Judaism, what certain saints were or are to Catholicism, but with this difference, that whilst a Christian saint can change old dogmas, or institute new ones, the Jewish saint derives all his power and influence from the strictness with which he observes the law. He is the mirror of the law, and should he not reflect it well, the community would instantly take cognizance of it. Rabbi Nathan belonged to a time and to a town where the daylight of reason had broadly entered; there was not ascribed to him, nor did he arrogate to himself, any exceptional power, although on some occasions it had been remarked that he seemed to know beforehand of certain deaths. Such young members of the community as Wolf Israel—if members they can be called—looked on him as a petrification of bygone times; but by the community at large he was regarded with respect, and watched with jealousy.

When Aaron entered, Rabbi Nathan was seated at his Sabbath-supper, surrounded by his whole family—his wife and daughter, and his three sons with their wives and children. At the sight of the new-comer, he exclaimed gaily: 'The later the evening, the greater the guest! Come, take a seat and have some supper!'

The family received Aaron in the same friendly way, and drew their chairs closer together, so that there was a place left just by the side of Esther.

'How long it is since we have seen you!' said she to him in a subdued tone.

'Yes, it is a fortnight; but you may be sure it has been a long and painful time to me.'

'Father has asked after you; he likes you so much.'

'Blessed be God!' said Aaron, touching with his hand Esther's sleeve. Esther gave him her hand, secretly, as she fancied.

'But you do not eat!' said Frummit, the rabbi's wife, to her guest.

'Thank you, I have made an excellent supper.'

'Young folks ought to have a better appetite,' said the artful Frummit, who knew perfectly well that at a certain stage of love young folks lose all their appetite; 'but,' she added, 'some cake you can eat anyhow, and a good large piece I shall send you.'

She first cut some for her husband and then for Aaron, but Aaron's portion broke in two. 'You have not prayed well this week,' said she jestingly.

Aaron blushed, and abruptly turning to one of the sons asked, whether it was true that people ruddled (talked) of Joel Salomon.

Joel Salomon was a rich man, and the family consequently were highly surprised to hear that there was any doubt or suspicion abroad about him. In a lively discussion, Joel Salomon's resources, manner of trading, &c., were closely scrutinised, and it irresistibly led to the conclusion, that he was above all ruddle, when Aaron said: 'I was mistaken; it is not Joel Salomon but Amsel Salomon.'

'Amsel Salomon! That gascht!'^{*} the sons cried, laughing, 'who will give himself the trouble to ruddle about him? He is not free from his bankruptcy yet! Aaron, where have you been to hear the news?'

Aaron, in his confusion, knew not what to answer; when Rabbi Nathan said with a smile, and a glance at Aaron and Esther—'Aaron is quite right.'

None of the sons was able to comprehend how Aaron could be right; but what a father or a rabbi says is not to be contradicted, especially on a Friday night, and so the matter dropped.

'Rebbausai, let us bentschen,'[†] said the rabbi, who requested Aaron to perform the task of precentor.

Aaron coloured up to the brow, when Rabbi Nathan

thus, for the first time, bestowed this significant honour upon him, and never had he with such fervour blessed and thanked the God of Israel, as he did now.

After grace, Rabbi Nathan, reclining on the sofa, sang one of the Sabbath hymns, and then began to praise the Sabbath in an improvised drascha or lecture: 'How happy is the good Jew, who observes the law of God! With him is peace and stillness, as on the mountain, when the cedars are awaiting the evening breeze, or as on the shore, when the sun sets behind the isles. His heart is comforted with the sight of children and children's children as by fragrant aloe and myrrh; he shares his meal with them, and there is enough for all, for the blessing of God is on purity. When the repast is over and the blessing said, his soul rests as on rose-leaves and delighted sings: Blessed be our Lord, Israel's God, who has given us the Sabbath!'

'Amen!' said all, as is the custom every time God is blessed.

'Behold, my children,' continued the rabbi, 'how Gentiles observe their Sabbath. The rich either seek worldly pleasures, or, if not, they forget, or try to forget, that they have thousands of brethren suffering on that day as on other days, wanting shelter and food, quarrelling and rioting, as the unhappy do. But whilst we enjoy our blessed Sabbath, we hear no cry of distress from our brethren; for before the stars were out, God's angels, Mercy, and Pity, and Piety, went from door to door with full baskets and returned with empty baskets, and not one door was forgotten. We know that all over Israel there is comfort and peace to-night—blessed be God, the Lord of Israel, who dispenses benefits and alms!'

'Amen!' said they all.

After a pause, Aaron in a low voice, asked: 'Rabbi, if in such a holy community were one who had sinned, eaten of forbidden food, what then?'

Rabbi Nathan's countenance became serious, when he answered: 'It might be that the offender had committed his sin secretly, so that nobody knew of it. But in the society of the pious he would feel as a woman who had lost her innocence, and this would be punishment enough. When, however, it came to light, I certainly would not lift my hand against the fallen woman, nor cast her out into the streets to be wholly lost, but,' added the rabbi with a severe glance, 'I would assuredly not marry her to my son.'

Aaron had bent his head; but one of the sons, in order to divert the mind of his father from the unpleasant subject, said: 'Rabbi, I have a schale^{*} to ask you. Is it true that it is written, we ought to sell the last thing we possess to be able to celebrate the Sabbath?'

The rabbi's countenance brightened, and he answered: 'It is written: There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should delight his senses in his labour. But the rabbis, who explain these words in the manner you mentioned, my son, are casuists, and in the letter forget the spirit; for the words are said in bitterness and dismay, and the same sage has declared: There is no good for the heart of man but to do good in his life. But that you may clearly see the truth, I will tell you the story about Rabbi Hranino and his wife Debora.'

They all drew near the rabbi to listen to the story, although it was not quite new to them; but what a rabbi and a father says always deserves attention, especially when he is a grandfather and the grandchildren are present.

'Once there was,' began the rabbi, 'a pious man by name Rabbi Hranino, his wife was called Debora. Rabbi Hranino was very poor, for he almost exclusively devoted himself to prayer and study, and as he lived in a dark age and a barbarous country, there

^{*} Poor fellow.

[†] Gentlemen, we will say grace. When three or more are assembled, one is selected to say the benediction aloud; the others follow in a very subdued tone.

^{*} A question in religious matters.

was no purse, or clause, or stipend, at least not for him. He always seemed happy and content, but it deeply pained his wife, that the other Jewish women could buy a far larger stock of provisions on Friday for their Sabbath-table than she could. Is not my husband a rabbi? she often said to herself—why, then, should he not fare at least as well as his neighbours? One week especially their earnings had been very scanty, and Debora had nothing to put on the Sabbath-table but bread and a jug of milk. The rabbi, having washed his hands, prepared to say kiddush with as much fervour as if the milk were costly wine, and as if the finest fish awaited him. Debora could bear it no longer, but, weeping and sobbing, began to complain of their poverty. "How long," she asked, "shall we suffer want and be scorned by our neighbours, who see no smoke ascend from our chimney?" "My dear wife," answered the rabbi, "as long as it pleases God." "But," she exclaimed, "why do you not pray to God for wealth? God hearkens to the prayers of a rabbi, and He will be pleased to give you a better Sabbath-table." "Listen, my darling," said the rabbi, "and I will tell you a tale. This afternoon, a little while before Sabbath, I had a dream. I dreamed we went to supper just as we have done now, and that the table was poor, and that you complained and cried, just as you do now; then, moved by your tears, I besought God to give us wealth; and lo! a large diamond fell down before us. You were very glad. We sold the jewel and got so much money for it, that for the future we had a splendid Sabbath-table, and whenever you went to market, you were envied by the other housewives. Then—I dreamed further—we died, and we went to Heaven among the other rabbis and their wives. Every rabbi had his wife by his side, and each couple had a golden table with vessels richly set with diamonds. All at once you discovered that there was a whispering going on around us, and the wives of the rabbis looked with scorn on our table, for there the largest and brightest diamond was missing. Then you began to weep, and you asked the angel, who had led us in, why our table was not as well and richly ornamented as that of the others; to which the angel replied, that having on earth asked for and received the jewel, we of course could not have it here. Then you wept still more bitterly than before, and wished you had never had it on earth, and you were inconsolable and wished to leave; but this was impossible. I felt so grieved at your despair, that I arose and—awoke." When Rabbi Hranino had finished this tale, Debora sat silent awhile, but then rising, she approached her husband and kissed him. He told her some more stories, and when they said grace, they were as happy and contented as though they had had the most splendid repast. My children," said Rabbi Nathan, concluding, "we learn from Rabbi Hranino, that it is better to worship God with a pious mind than by eating and drinking. A savoury meal is good too, however, for it gives man pleasure, and it pleases God to behold happy human faces."

A thunder-storm that for some time had been lowering in the air meanwhile burst over the town, and, just as the rabbi's last words were uttered, a violent clap was heard.

Rabbi Nathan started in his seat, his eyes became unusually bright, and he exclaimed: "There speaks Adaonoi Elauhim!" Rebbausai, let us say the blessing! And, whilst the women closed the windows, the men covering their heads, said the prescribed blessing to the Lord who sends the thunder.

III.—THE SABBATH.

The events which this tale is intended to commemorate, took place at Copenhagen, in the year 1830 and

odd. Since that time great progress has been effected in the world—lucifer-matches, percussion-caps, express trains, electric telegraphs, tubular bridges, photography, and crystal palaces, have sprung into existence, and even the most pious clausurer has given up the three-cornered hat, the red-brown coat, the Wellington boots, and the long beard, and walks in the street like any other gentleman. You will perhaps fancy the last-mentioned change too small to deserve special notice; but if our honest and intelligent Rabbi Nathan, in the year above named, had been taken to the Menai Straits, and asked: "Do you think it would be easier for Stephenson to throw a tube for railway-trains across this strait, or for you to take off your beard, and to wear a round hat and a frock-coat?" Rabbi Nathan, assuredly, would have answered: "Stephenson shall throw his bridge across this strait before I take off my beard or wear a round hat." The change *has* taken place, however, and whilst visible or physical nature has yielded to progress, a moral improvement has penetrated even the lower classes of society—nay, the implacable enemy of the Jews, the street-boy, now gravely passes the most venerable Jew without asking him the pertinent question—"Will you have a bit of pork?"

It was otherwise in those dark ages thirty years ago.

It was on the Sabbath following the evening described in our preceding chapter. At that time, Copenhagen had not, as now, one fine large synagogue, but several small ones; and that, to which Rabbi Nathan belonged, was situated in a back-yard belonging to a coppersmith, the little community paying the coppersmith to cease from his labour during the service. The deepest stillness thus prevailed in the sacred place, and seemed embodied in the perpetually burning, bright 'holy lamp,' and the surrounding tapers. A little boy having come too early, had mounted a bench to try and catch the wax dripping from one of the tapers, whilst the beadle made warning signals to him to desist, but durst not move, engaged as he was in an extra sacred prayer. The congregation entering, they one by one noiselessly approached the oraun hakodesh (the ark), reverentially to kiss the curtain drawn before it. One must have seen the fervour, the expression of deep satisfaction at being on this sacred spot, to understand how so lengthened and oft-repeated a liturgy could spring up, intended, it might seem, to retain the faithful as long as possible in the abode of peace, in a world of dream or idealism, whilst the real world that awaited them was so harsh and often so pitiless. Nothing extraordinary happened this day during the service, the principle of which still is, that every Jew is in active, in direct communication with God, without any priest as mediator—a principle that finds its highest expression in the fact, that twelve members, one for each of the tribes, are called up to read each his part of the Thora. Before this takes place, the Thora is with solemn pomp taken out of the Ark, the member on whom this honourable task devolved, uplifting the open scroll to the gaze of the congregation, and exclaiming: 'Thauros Mausche emmes' (the law of Moses is truth), those assembled responding aloud—'Thauros Mausche emmes!' Persecuted, bowed, crushed, our race has, during centuries, once every week at least, lifted its head and raised this cry.

After service, Rabbi Nathan waited at the gate for his wife and daughter—for the two sexes do not sit together—and as they came up, they were met by Aaron Jacobson and his parents. On both sides, it was a performance of art, indeed, to exchange greetings in the face of the crowd, for both parties knew that an engagement was in contemplation between Aaron and Esther, although as yet no decisive words had been spoken; the problem was how to shew neither too much nor too little kindness, how to avoid a mien

* The majestic Lord, our God.

that might afterwards be commented upon, should no engagement follow, and all this was the more difficult, as both families, by anticipation, felt as endeared relatives to each other. Rabbi Nathan broke the ice by taking off his three-cornered hat with both hands, and bowing to Mrs Jacobson, whilst old Mr Jacobson, closely watching and imitating him, bowed to Frummit; then the two gentlemen bowed to each other, and the two ladies did the same; and all four said 'Good Schabbas!' Aaron was overlooked as by common consent, in order not to increase the difficulty of the situation.

Just at the moment when the ladies and gentlemen bowed to each other, a street-boy passed, and observing their ceremonious behaviour, exclaimed in a shrill voice: 'Ah, look how the Jews stand there bowing and scraping!'

The old gentlemen changed countenance, without allowing themselves to be disturbed in their movements; it might be easily seen that from their earliest days they had been accustomed to such impertinences, and had learned to conquer their temper, like a shying horse that has been taught to pass the water-mill, yet lays his ears back nevertheless. But Aaron, upon whom the sun of emancipation, as the reader knows, had sent some rays, exclaimed: 'If I only had a stick, I would give that boy a lesson.'

'On Sabbath, Aaron?' said Rabbi Nathan, with mild reproach in his voice. 'Suppose the stick broke!'

Aaron was silent, but another Jew approaching, said: 'What rischus!† That cursed boy seems determined to follow us.'

'It is nothing,' said Rabbi Nathan; 'how much more had the Jews at Codzesen to complain of?'

'What had they to complain of?' said his interlocutors, glad to escape hearing the remarks of the boy, and also glad to have a walk with Rabbi Nathan.

'At Codzesen, in Little Poland,' began Rabbi Nathan, 'the Jews were dreadfully persecuted. Not only were they assailed with bad words as we are, but with stones likewise; they were forbidden to have Christian servants, and they were thus left on Sabbaths without light or fire; even worse befell them, for at length a baker made up his mind to rid the town of them entirely. You know, after having eaten matzos‡ for eight days, how we long, at the end of Pesach,§ for leavened bread, we are as eager for it at the expiration of Pesach, as we were eager to welcome and consecrate the matzos on the first night of the festival. So tickle are we! Change is our delight, and we should not feel content even in Paradise, in communion with God's holy angels, did we appear there wrapped in our frail bodies. Now, upon this longing the baker based his wicked design. On the last night of Passover he poisoned all his bread; but in this emergency the Lord God willed that one whom He has pronounced "an abomination," and from whom "He turneth away His face," should become an instrument of good. There lived in the town a young Jew, a poscho Jisroel,|| who insolently trampled on all sacred customs, and scoffed in the very faces of his brethren—nay, he had even gone so far as to promise marriage to a Gentile, a servant of the baker. During Passover he did not, as a matter of course, go to synagogue—he did not even attend when the names of his poor parents were mentioned among the dead!

'On the last night of the festival the girl had appointed to receive him in her own room, but as she could not manage to get him in there, she hid him in a store-room adjoining the baker's shop. Becoming hungry he was just on the point of eating a roll, when the girl entered, and begged him, for God's sake, not

to eat of that bread; but, as he persisted, she at length told him the terrible secret. Seized with horror, he started off, and rushed like a madman, with uncovered head, into the synagogue, where the Jews, believing he was mocking them, attempted to cast him out; but, forcing his way to the chief rabbi, he told him what he had heard. The chief rabbi then mounting the pulpit, desired the community to omit the blessings customary at the conclusion of the festival, but requested that they should return to their homes, and observe the Passover one day longer. He was obeyed, and another supply of bread procured: the king was informed of the matter, and the baker was imprisoned, and afterwards hanged. Since then, the Jews of Codzesen observe nine days Passover instead of eight. It is said that the young man, through whose instrumentality the community was saved, repenting of his former evil life, made atonement and became one of the most pious Jews of Codzesen.'

'This reminds me of another Polish story,' said old Jacobson; 'but you know it, no doubt, Rabbi Nathan.'

'Well, let us have it,' replied the rabbi, with a stolen glance back at the boy, who stubbornly followed and addressed them.

'Allow me to carry your umbrella, Rabbi,' said Aaron.

'Thank you, my son,' answered the Rabbi, becoming unguarded in the presence of the foe.

'At Polositz,' began Aaron's father, 'there lived a harandar, merchant and distiller, a wealthy man, who was on friendly terms with the Christian authorities of the town. He had the misfortune to lose all his children soon after their birth, which afflicted him deeply. "What is all my wealth?" he used to say, with tears in his eyes; "I am working for strangers—I have no child to become the inheritor, to whom I could cheerfully resign my worldly possessions." For the seventh time his wife gave birth to a child, a son, and as the infant seemed strong and healthy, the harandar had hopes of its life. When the Bidian ha ben* took place, the Christian bishop of the town was present, as he usually was on similar occasions, in the harandar's house. On the same day, an old, poorly-clad Jew had arrived in the town, and was, of course, invited by the harandar, of whom he learned the misfortune that had hitherto swayed the house. Presently, the bishop approached the cradle, and stooped down over the babe, when he was struck in the face by an invisible hand; he staggered, and recoiled from the cradle. On recovering his senses, he asked the harandar if a Rabbi Mausche (Moses) was present. The harandar replied that half of the party bore this name; but, from a corner of the room, the poorly-clad stranger exclaimed: "I am the man whom he means; let that destroyer of Israel come to me!" The bishop went up to him, and they had a long conversation—the result was, that they agreed to meet next time for a mortal struggle. They accordingly met, each accompanied by his friends, and each began by drawing three circles around himself, when the bishop commenced his conjurations. A howling wolf, emerging from the forest, and passing the circles around the bishop, approached those of Rabbi Mausche, but before touching the outer ring, ran off with a yell. The bishop, with some uneasiness, began his spell anew, and a huge bear came from the forest, and

* When a Jewish first-born son, not of the tribe of Levi, is a month old, the redemption (Bidian ha ben) takes place. It originates from the time when Moses made the tribe of Levi a priestly cast, and exempted the other tribes from officially serving the Lord in the temple. The ceremony is performed in this way: The father invites some Jews, amongst whom a kaubein (a descendant of Aaron), and shewing the child to the kaubein, says: 'This is my first-born son.' The kaubein takes the baby in his arms and says: 'The child is my property.' The father replies: 'I should like to purchase it.' The kaubein: 'How much wilt thou pay?' The father offers a small sum, that is devoted to the poor, and the ceremony concludes with a dinner.

* On Sabbath it is not permitted to tear, or break, or destroy anything.

† Enmity to Jews.

‡ Passover.

§ Unleavened bread.

|| Scoffer of Israel.

running towards Rabbi Mausehe, crossed his outer circle, but then, crying like an angry child, made off to the forest. The bishop, pale, with drops of sweat upon his brow, recommenced for the third time, when a wild shrieking boar, burst forth from the forest, leaped over the second and third circles of Rabbi Mausehe; but suddenly turning round, rushed towards the bishop, and leaping over all his circles, laid hold of him and tore him to pieces.*

Rabbi Nathan quietly smiled, but the elder Jew, who accompanied them, exclaimed, with a glance at the street-boy, 'Thus may all the foes of Israel be dealt with! May their own hatred consume them!'

The street-boy had by this time, as it seemed, got into an altercation with another boy; and Rabbi Nathan, now stopping at his own door, said: 'That on Sabbath we may not part in a mood tainted with bitterness, I will tell you another story. According to sages of old, there is between heaven and earth an expanse—the firmament—inhabited by demons, who are always trying to intercept the good gifts sent down to us from heaven. When the soul of Moses was descending to be born in mortal shape, the demons were on the watch; but a violent feud arising among them, he passed unobserved. When too late, they hastened to make peace; but'—the rabbi added, with an arch smile, and a merry glance at the street-boys—'they cannot keep it.'

They separated with a laugh, but Aaron managed to forget to give Rabbi Nathan back his umbrella, so that a pretext might be found for paying him a visit in the evening.

He came to the house, just as Rabbi Nathan and his sons, on their return from the evening-service, were about to make *avdolo*.*

It is customary for the youngest boy of the family to assist the father of the house at this ceremony; but, as the grandchildren were heard merrily playing in a distant room, Rabbi Nathan said: 'Well, let the children have their play; come, Aaron, you are the youngest man in the room.'

Aaron's heart leapt with joy when Rabbi Nathan thus treated him as a member of the family, and he fervently performed the little task allotted to him. Rabbi Nathan blessed the light, the wine, and the fragrant spices tendered him by Aaron; he blessed the day of rest and the days of toil, the family and their dwelling. The goblet of wine was passed, that all might drink thereof, and the casket of spice was likewise passed, that all might enjoy the fragrance. Lastly, after the taper was extinguished in the wine, and the hymn *Hamardil bein kaudesch lectraul* sung (He who makes a division between holy and profane), Rabbi Nathan wished Aaron a happy week and a happy year, upon which Aaron bowed his head and received the blessing; then, one by one, the sons drew near, and in their turn were blessed.

During the ceremony, Esther had been seated in a corner gazing on Aaron, and was perhaps as proud of him as any Christian lady of the knight who broke a lance in her honour.

IV.—SCHLAUMO ZWICKER.

The following morning, Schlaumo Zwicker came to Rabbi Nathan to cut ('*zwick*') his beard. The real name of Schlaumo Zwicker was Schlaumo Leib; but his father being a hair-cutter, had acquired that German surname, and the son, although he had given up the profession learned in his youth, and lived on his property, still retained the name; and he continued, but without any fee, to cut or '*zwick*' the beards of the most pious of the community, as he believed it to be an act pleasing in the eyes of God. He thus achieved for himself a name for piety, and he was highly

esteemed by the old people, although the young were not very fond of him. They said he was a gambler, and frequented gambling-houses; but on being asked for proofs, they had none to offer—for who could admit having seen him at such a house? But then they urged that his small eyes and his large, thin, pale lips clearly shewed a propensity to gambling, to which the old folks, being no disciples of Lavater, only said, 'Nonsense!' Schlaumo's mouth was broad, indeed, and, as if to irritate his critics, he made it still broader by always firmly closing his lips; but this the pitiless young people contended he only did to hide the loss of his teeth. All acknowledged, however, that Schlaumo could bite when he thought it fit, and that he had a 'dangerous mouth.'

Having placed the towel before Rabbi Nathan, Schlaumo went on for some time in silence, for Schlaumo had the quality of never speaking unless drawn out, just as a barrel of beer retains the beverage until the tap is turned. Rabbi Nathan, after a while, began the conversation by asking: 'What news there was in town?'

'News?' said Schlaumo—'news? I do not know any. There are no good news now a days. What is new is bad, although it has already ceased to be new.'

'For Heaven's sake, what has happened?' exclaimed Rabbi Nathan.

'What has happened? Have you seen any one from our synagogue? Ask them! Ask them, and you will hear the old news—the synagogue almost empty on Sabbath. Only fancy, yesterday we had to send for one for minjan.*

'Awful!' said the rabbi; 'but they will come next Sabbath.'

'Heaven grant it!' replied Schlaumo, turning his eyes upward; 'but,' he added, 'it is of no use denying that religion is falling into contempt. Since the reformers have succeeded in getting a new pompous funeral-carriage, day by day there are more who leave us. I wish them a funeral-carriage all of them together!'

'Beware of your words! The Lord our God wills not the death of the transgressor. There may come a change for the better; it will come, it must come, for you are right—there is great wickedness abroad. If they sinned, and transgressed, and scorned the law, believing they had found a better, it would not be so despicable; but they are often bad Jews only to please bad Christians, or only to make the Christians forget that they have crooked noses—fools as they are!'

'You speak as behoves a rabbi,' said Schlaumo; 'pity that your words have but two ears to listen to them. There is, for instance, that fellow, Wolf Israel, a regular Poscho Jisroel.† Yesterday, on returning home from the synagogue, whom should I meet in the street smoking a cigar?‡—whom else than Wolf Israel? And will you believe it, Rabbi Nathan, he drew a long whiff and blew it at me! May he be!'—And Schlaumo spat.

Rabbi Nathan said: 'I pity his father.'

'His father?' replied Schlaumo; 'I think you may spare your pity. I think the only difference is, that while the son smokes a cigar in the street, the father smokes a pipe in his room. A bad set are all those Israels!'

'Have you seen him smoke?' said Rabbi Nathan.

'Whom?—the father? No; but you may be sure I am not far from right.'

'If you have not seen it, in your place I would not accuse him. It is written: The tongue of the just shall bloom with wisdom, but that of the unjust shall wither.'

* To perform divine service, ten adult Jews must be present; this number is called minjan.

† Scoffer of Judaism.

‡ It is a sin on Sabbath to touch fire, consequently to smoke.

* The religious ceremony ending the Sabbath, and ushering in the days of labour.

Schlaumo Zwicker went on cutting a while in silence, but presently he began again. 'The worst is, that this Wolf Israel leads other young men astray. Last Thursday, the evening being very fine, I took a walk in the wood to bless God for the new buds and young leaves. On passing a tent I heard, as I fancied, voices I knew; and, peeping through the door, I saw a number of youngsters, and among them two young Jews seated at supper, and eating—a trifle!—beef-steak! And who were the two Jews? One was Wolf Israel, and the other—who was it, do you think, Rabbi Nathan?'

'Eh?'

'Aaron Jacobson!'

'Aaron Jacobson?' exclaimed the rabbi, startled.

'Yes, I tell you, Aaron Jacobson,' said Schlaumo, replacing the towel.

'Schlaumo Leib,' said Rabbi Nathan, 'is it not possible that you were mistaken? Remember, one of the ten great commandments is: "Do not bear false witness." To lie is a deathly sin.'

'May God Almighty on the day of judgment cast my soul away from his presence, and the souls of my father and mother, if I lie!'

Rabbi Nathan clenched his hands, and tears of wrath and grief flowed from his eyes. Suddenly he exclaimed: 'Oh, now I remember he asked me! and I allowed him to say grace at my table! I received him as a son, and permitted him to sit at my daughter's side. Oh, oh!'

'Rabbi Nathan,' said Schlaumo in a compassionate voice, whilst folding up the towel, and replacing the scissors in their sheath, 'you must take care of your daughter while there is time. A girl, when seeing much of a man, takes him to her heart. Of course, it is time yet, but—'

'Alas, you are right; you are but too right. But where am I to find a husband for her? I am not rich; I can give her but little.'

'Well, well, Rabbi Nathan,' said Schlaumo, and something like a smile brightened his eyes, and broke the straight broad line of his lips, 'I wish myself a poverty like yours. But as it is, I have come to you to-day as a Schatchen.*'

'Have you, indeed, Schlaumo Leib?'

'Ay, I know some one who wishes to marry your daughter.'

'Is he a pious man?'

'So pious, that he will, God permitting, in a short time become a clausener. You know, Rabbi Nathan, there is a vacancy.'

'Yes. Has he any means?'

'He is well off, and a man in his best years.'

'Who is he, Schlaumo Leib?'

'He stands before you.'

'You!' exclaimed the Rabbi. 'You! But you are too old for my daughter: she is only eighteen.'

'And I am a little past forty. I am in my best years; and I hope to become a clausener; I am seeking it, and I shall get it, no doubt.'

'Certainly,' said Rabbi Nathan, musing, 'it would be an honour to my daughter to marry a clausener.'

'Well, and I will be kind to her, depend upon it; and you can answer before God for having confided her to me.'

'True,' said the Rabbi.

'Will you, then, give her to me? Let her come in!'

'Well, well, we shall see. Come some other day. My head is quite turned; I feel giddy. I think I will; I hope so, but wait a couple of days.'

'Rabbi, it is written: Do not say to thy neighbour, come again to-morrow, if thou hast it to-day.'

'But there is written likewise: Let not thy mouth hasten, nor thy heart be in a hurry to utter words before God; and farther: Better not to promise than

to promise and not to pay. But in two days—that Aaron! I think I will; I really think so.'

'If you think so, it will be!' exclaimed Schlaumo, joyfully. 'You will become my father! Good-bye, my father.'

When Schlaumo had left, Rabbi Nathan sat awhile thoughtful and grieved; he then washed his hands, and gave himself up to prayer.

V.—ESTHER.

The rabbi remained in his study all day, except at dinner-time, but even then he remained silent. Next morning he called Esther, who, with happy presentiments, went into his room and saluted him. The rabbi tried to look steadily at her, but gave it up, and sat with downcast eyes. At length he said: 'Esther, this day-week you will be a bride.'

'Yes, father,' she answered, with a blush.

'Esther,' resumed the rabbi, 'you do not ask the name of your bridegroom?'

'Who is it, father?'

'Well—Schlaumo Leib.'

The colour faded from Esther's cheek, and she faltered in answering: 'Yes, father.'

'Esther,' said the rabbi, 'thou art a good child. Thou canst go now.'

Esther left the room, but the door was no sooner closed than she burst into tears, and hastening to her mother, threw herself into her arms, exclaiming: 'Mother, dear! he says I am to marry Schlaumo Leib!'

'Yes, I knew it,' said Frummit, with tears in her eyes; 'the rabbi told me so last night.'

'And you did not tell me a word about it,' exclaimed Esther reproachfully, uplifting her face bathed in tears.

'The rabbi forbade me to speak about it,' Frummit answered.

'Mother! mother! I shall die if I marry Schlaumo Leib. When the rabbi said it, I felt as if death touched my heart.'

'Have courage, my child,' said Frummit; 'what the rabbi resolves is right. If God will it, you will be happy with Schlaumo Leib.'

'Alas, mother!' Esther replied, 'my father is wise, and well versed in the law; but such things he does not understand.'

'Do not commit a sin, my child,' said Frummit, warningly.

At this moment the door opened, and Aaron Jacobson leapt joyfully into the room.

'Mascul! bliss! happiness!' he exclaimed; 'our great East Indianman has arrived with a rich cargo! I have been made a partner of the firm! I am on my way to the bank to get these bills discounted, but I could not help running in to tell you. Now, Esther, my darling, my love, delight of my eyes—now, if you love me, as I do you, we can be married.'

'Hush! let not the rabbi hear you,' said Esther.

'What is the matter?' Aaron asked in a lower voice; 'why do you weep, Esther? What has happened, mother dear?'

'I must marry Schlaumo Leib,' said Esther, bursting anew in tears.

'Marry Schlaumo Leib?' cried Aaron, standing like a statue. 'Is it really so?—I can't believe it, mother!'

'It is so, Aaron Jacobson,' Frummit answered.

'Mother!' cried he, 'do you give your consent? Will you permit it? No, no—you will not, dear blessed mother.'

'Should I, the wife of a rabbi, be disobedient to my husband?' asked Frummit, rising proudly.

'An evil tongue has poisoned the ear of the rabbi,' said Aaron, sadly.

'Yes, it is so,' replied Frummit. 'And now, Aaron,

* Match-maker, or marriage-broker.

you must leave us; it does not behove us that we women should be alone with you.'

'Leave you?' said Aaron, in a desponding tone: 'Leave you? How can I? How shall I bear it? Esther, I have told you I love you deeply, sincerely, eternally. Give me thy kiss of love, be it even the last before death.'

'It is not right,' said Frummit, going between them.

'Then, it is true—terribly, fatally true!' exclaimed Aaron. 'Of what use is all my good-fortune now? Why did I run breathless to you? My happiness has lost its brightness; my sun has set; I am miserable—lost; I am punished; I care for nothing more!'

In his agitation the bills fell from his hand; and, as he stooped to regain them, Esther for one moment, in spite of her grief, was tempted to smile; but the next moment, as Aaron rose, seeing the big tears roll down his cheek, she leapt to her feet, and rushing madly towards him, she kissed him, exclaiming: 'Now, I have kissed thee, Aaron: let the other one take me now!' upon which, weeping and sobbing, she threw herself into her mother's arms.

But Aaron, having felt Esther's kiss on his lips, rising to his full height, cried: 'Blessed be thou, my bride! Thou shalt become my wife! thou shalt, in truth! Almighty God will help me!'

'Amen!' exclaimed Frummit, with uplifted hands, whilst Aaron rushed away.

VI.—AARON.

The next morning, Aaron entered Rabbi Nathan's study.

'Aaron Jacobson!' exclaimed the rabbi, holding up his hand as if to keep him away.

But Aaron still drew near; and after a pause, said, with quivering lips: 'Rabbi, I have sinned.'

'I know it, Aaron Jacobson,' answered the rabbi.

Aaron continued: 'I have eaten of forbidden food, and have acted the hypocrite in your house.'

'Have you come to mock an old man who has behaved kindly to you?' asked the rabbi, indignantly.

'Oh, Rabbi Nathan,' said Aaron, struggling to retain his tears, 'do you think me so wicked? I am unhappy, and come to you crying for mercy. Have you no kind word left for me?'

'Aaron Jacobson, I forgive you your sin against me and my house. Leave in peace; no hatred—no word of evil shall follow you. Your sin against God is a matter between Him and you. The Lord is just.'

'Rabbi,' replied Aaron, 'I cannot talk with God. I can address Him; but even before my sin I was not worthy of hearing His voice, as did Moses and the prophets. I come to you, one of the pious men who know His law. Do we not before Passover pass our copper-vessels through fire, and steep our crystal vessels in water for three days, to purify them. Cannot a man, then, once unclean, become pure again? Is not repentance the fire that purifies, and penitence the water that cleanses from sin?'

'Yes, it is, Aaron Jacobson; and if you in your heart do repent and make atonement, the Lord will forgive you. But we mortals, being unable to look into the heart, ask for signs.'

'I know that, Rabbi Nathan. The chief-rabbi shall pronounce sentence on me. I will prostrate myself at the threshold of the synagogue, and the faithful shall tread upon me and smite me with sticks.'

'Aaron Jacobson,' replied the rabbi, with tears in his eyes, 'such things do not take place in this city, or in this country; any one can trespass and remain unpunished. Here nobody is permitted to pronounce sentence but the men of the Christian king; and how could these, eating of unclean things themselves and breaking the Sabbath, judge a Jew?'

'Then I prostrate myself before you,' cried Aaron, bending down before the rabbi; 'put your foot upon my neck, and trample me into the dust! I will lay bare my back; smite it until it bleed.'

Rabbi Nathan's lips forsook their service, and it was some time before he could answer: 'My foot cannot take the sin from off your neck. I am myself a sinner before God; I am but an erring man, and am not allowed to castigate another.'

'Rabbi!' exclaimed Aaron, 'do not plunge me into despair. Do not repel the penitent. Remember, rabbi, it is written: The Lord, our God, wills not the death of the transgressor; but that he forsake his evil way and live.'

The rabbi remained silent, absorbed in thought. Aaron, rising suddenly, with streaming eyes, said: 'I tell you, rabbi, I do repent. I feel that the sorrow and anguish I suffer are an atonement for my sin. Ay, at this moment I am purified; and I stand before you as a brother—I claim your daughter. Give her to me, that I may, with her, lead a life pleasing in the sight of God; or, if you can take the responsibility, cast me from her and from you; cast me forth to despair and despair; do so, Rabbi Nathan, a servant of our merciful and gracious God! O Lord, my God, to whom I have prayed the whole night, be Thou our judge at this moment! I declare in my heart and with my tongue the sacred words: "Schema Jisroel, Adaunoi Elauheinu, Adaunoi Eched!"'

The eyes of Rabbi Nathan began to brighten as on Friday evening during the storm, and rising, he said: 'In the name of Almighty God! my brother, lay thy hand in mine, and swear thou wilt live as a faithful servant of the Lord!'

Aaron exclaimed: 'I swear it, by the head of my mother, and by my father's life!'

Rabbi Nathan said: 'Adaunoi, my Lord, Israel's God! Thy servant humbly draws near in Thy behalf. The barrier between Thy people and the Gentiles is falling down; we are as in a garden, of which the fence is broken, and all can enter and tread down its flowers. A refuge is left us around our hearths. On Thy behalf and for Thy name's sake, I take this youth by the hand, and lead him in, and bind him to Thy law by holy marriage with my daughter. Lord, God of Israel, vouchsafe Thy blessings! Aaron, cover your head!'

Aaron obeyed, and Rabbi Nathan gave him the benediction.

The next moment Schlaumo Zwicker entered the room.

On perceiving him the light faded from the eyes of Rabbi Nathan, and he sat quietly down in his chair.

'Scholaum aleichem! Peace be with you!' said Schlaumo.

'Aleichem scholaum!' answered the rabbi.

Having waited in vain a minute or two for an invitation to take a seat, Schlaumo said: 'Fine weather to-day;' and with a side-glance at Aaron he added: 'Just the weather for a drive into the woods.'

Rabbi Nathan, looking as attentively as an astronomer up to the sky, answered: 'Fine weather, indeed; very fine weather.'

A new pause ensued, which Schlaumo, beginning to feel impatient, interrupted by saying: 'Rabbi Nathan, the two days are at end, I have come to talk to you about the matter you know of.'

'Well,' said Rabbi Nathan, drawing a long heavy breath; 'speak, Mr Leib.'

'It must be in private; bid the stranger leave.'

'He is no stranger—he is my son-in-law,' replied the rabbi, shutting his eyes like a boy at his first shot.

'Your son-in-law?' exclaimed Schlaumo; 'have you then more than one daughter?'

'No; I have but one—may the Lord preserve her!'
'But that one you promised to me, Rabbi Nathan!'
'I made no promise—I gave no definite answer; you need not talk so loud, Mr Leib.'

'Rabbi Nathan, beware! It is written: The word of a rabbi must not be equivocal; he shall say yes or no. You said you had no doubt—you thought you would! You dare not break your word! Beware, Rabbi! It is written: As the man is, the Lord will find him out.'

'If you utter an evil word, Mr Leib, it will be scattered to the winds, and will not fall on my head, for I am innocent. I have been incautious, and it is written: In incautious words lies a snare, but only a wicked man makes use of it.'

'I am not a wicked man!' cried Schlaumo; 'but I shall shew myself a stern man towards you, Rabbi Nathan! the world shall learn that your word is artful, your action cunning, your behaviour unworthy of a rabbi and a clausener. Your friends shall be few, before this sun sets!'

Rabbi Nathan looked despairingly at Aaron, who, on coming forward, was addressed by the exulting Schlaumo in these words: 'Worthy son-in-law of a faithless man—youth, whose presence threatens to contaminate and poison even such a staunch character as the venerable Rabbi Nathan—what do you want? what have you to say? Speak, be off, begone for ever from every pure Jewish house!'

Aaron, feeling himself strengthened by what had passed, received this volley rather coolly, and said: 'With your kind permission, Rabbi Nathan, I do not think that the community will force your daughter to marry a man whom she dislikes and abhors.'

'She does not abhor me! what insolence!'

'Are you quite sure of that?'

'I am!'

'Oh, then, Rabbi Nathan, allow her to come hither and choose for herself.'

'Stop!' cried Schlaumo; 'let her come, but you must put the question fairly. Does she abhor me? This is the question.'

On Esther's entering, Rabbi Nathan, without any introduction or explanation, said to her: 'Esther, my child, do you abhor Mr Schlaumo Leib?'

Assuredly she did, but the expression which her confident lover had made use of was so strong; besides her father had bid her marry Schlaumo, and unable to understand the scene, bewildered, she fancied she had been accused of disobedience to her father, and of slander against Schlaumo. She consequently answered: 'No, dear father.'

Triumphant Schlaumo, perceiving with Jewish perspicacity that the rabbi had given his daughter some command concerning him, resolved to follow up his first victory, and to conquer the whole position. Turning to Esther he said: 'Mamselle Esther, I have solicited your hand from your father, have you any objection?'

Poor Esther, with a glance of despair at Aaron, was, with true Jewish obedience about saying no, when Rabbi Nathan exclaimed: 'Esther, my child, answer for yourself! do not mind what I have said! Choose for yourself, in the name of God!' upon which Esther went towards Aaron, and timidly laid her hand on his arm.

'You have betrayed me, Rabbi Nathan!' exclaimed Schlaumo. 'This time there can be no doubt! Your own daughter and your worthy son-in-law shall bear witness that you cheated me by interfering with your mysterious warning. What did you say to your daughter before? What do you now bid her forget and discard? You shall explain this before the chief-rabbi, and you shall give a reason for preferring to give your daughter to a man who eats beef-steak in the wood, rather than to a pious Jew. Oh, shame on your gray hairs! I pity you! But

now I shall act on public grounds, and then pity would be a crime!'

At this critical moment a loud knock was heard at the door, and Wolf Israel entered the room. He had, as he explained, been running about town all the morning to find Aaron Jacobson, and talk to him on an important matter of business. Taking Aaron aside, he for a moment dropping the business-matter, and questioning his friend about the strange scene, was quickly informed of all that had passed. 'You see,' said Aaron, 'we shall all be made miserable. There will be a great scandal that will humiliate and crush Rabbi Nathan, and make me lose his daughter for ever.'

'Is that all!' said Wolf Israel, and approaching Schlaumo Zwicker, he requested to say a few words privately to him.

'Mr Leib,' said he, 'allow me to ask you, as a pious Jew, and well versed in the law, whether the sandwiches in the gambling-house in Princess Street are kosher or not?'

Schlaumo Zwicker suddenly turned livid, and, almost breathless, said: 'How do you know?'

'Know? What? I ask you—I put a question; you should know.'

'If you say a word, I'll kill you!'

'Bah, my dear Zwicker, that word is too big even for your mouth. I consider it as remaining in your throat.'

'I need not kill you. I am innocent—I did not pay attention—I did not see that there was meat on the sandwich—and afterwards, having discovered it, I vowed to Almighty God to fast every year on the anniversary of the day.'

'I do not doubt that the matter is settled between you and Heaven with mutual consent; but you know the world is wicked, and without a special message from Heaven, it will not permit a man who has eaten unclean food in a gambling-house, to become a clausener. I am afraid it will not.'

'My dear Wolf Israel, let us be friends. You are a jolly young fellow; you spend, I earn—I say!'

'Do you fancy you can bribe my father's son, Schlaumo Zwicker? Are you mad? You and all your wealth can find place in my father's waistcoat pocket—what insolence!'

'Mr Israel! I beg your pardon—I am very sorry—Do not make me miserable—You are a respectable son of respectable parents; it does not behove you to turn informer, especially as you must admit, then, that you have yourself visited that gambling-house.'

'I have—I have gambled as you have done; I have eaten sandwiches as you have done; but I do not aspire to become a clausener.'

'What shall I do, dear, worthy Mr Israel? Is there no mercy?'

'To be sure there is. You must give up all claim to Rabbi Nathan's daughter; you must promise to leave the old man in peace, and as long as you keep your promise, I will be silent.'

'Do you swear it? But by what can you swear? You are bound by nothing—I beg your pardon, Mr Israel, but you are not.'

'I give you my word of honour,' said Wolf Israel, with a haughty mien.

Schlaumo Zwicker having no choice, accepted the compact, and turning to Rabbi Nathan, said: 'Rabbi, it is written: Better dry bread in peace than a rich house full of strife. What happiness could I expect from a marriage with your daughter, when your goodwill did not follow her? Aaron Jacobson is a respectable young man; for his sake I give you back your word. We will forget and be friends! Masoul, joy, happiness! good-bye!' And leaving the room, he added in a low voice: 'May my wish be fulfilled in the spirit, and not to the letter!'

When he had left, Rabbi Nathan starting up,

excl
Bless
mit!
house
child
taking
the v

AMON
the l
dying
the m
of my
nibbin
may f
frill, a
himse
operat
No do
are st
from a
a mach
once u
before
aspect
with
mendin
lessons
stalks,
pucker
split th
his fee
accom
sorry f
the let
handw
vile se
penmar
to the
thing
made t
man in
the mo
would
letter
were in
inditing
reflect,
the pas
ship, m
in this
For god
over, an
us not
When
hard to
sion of
is at le
that sto
made l
they w
When,
apertur
secure
develop
of its co
imp ing
The var
is imme
that wil

exclaimed: 'Blessed be God! There, she is thine. Blessings on you for ever and ever! Frummit, Frummit! Come in! Frummit, thou hast a bride in thy house! Send for Aaron's parents, and for all my children. Next Sabbath—what a Sabbath!' And taking his wife by the hand, the rabbi sang in Hebrew the verses of Solomon's song:

'Behold, thou art fair, my love, yea, pleasant;
Also our couch is green!'

THE MAKING OF A PEN.

AMONG other elegant old-fashioned arts which graced the leisurely days of the Georges, but are rapidly dying out in this high-pressure time, must be reckoned the making and mending of quill pens. How many of my readers comprehend the mysteries of shaping, nibbing, and splitting? Here and there, perhaps, you may find an elderly gentleman, probably arrayed in a frill, and a blue coat with brass buttons, who prides himself on his dexterity in these almost obsolete operations; but the number is thinning every year. No doubt, at the clubs and government offices, quills are still in use, but then they are bought ready-made from a wholesale dealer, who manufactures them by a machine, and are re-sold as soon as they have been once used. In bygone days, a pen was often renewed before it was discarded. Well do I recollect the aspect of my old schoolmaster sitting at his desk with several trays of quills before him, with the mending of which he occupied himself as we said our lessons to him. How gently he handled the feather-stalks, as though he loved them—how drolly he puckered up his mouth and lowered his brows as he split the point on his thumb-nail—and how pleasantly his features relaxed when that critical process was accomplished. I think we have some reason to be sorry for the decline of this modest art. I will not go the length of saying that steel pens have ruined the handwriting of this generation, for I suspect that the vile scrawling and scribbling which often passes for penmanship, is due not so much to the instrument as to the impatient haste with which writing and everything else is now performed; but a steel pen ready made to one's hand is a dangerous temptation to a man in a fit of passion, who is apt, in the heat of the moment, to dash down on paper sayings which he would give his saltiest tears to blot out again after his letter has been despatched. In the days when quills were in vogue, the mending of them, preparatory to inditing one's thoughts, gave time to ponder and reflect, and thus prevented one from photographing the passing mood of wrath. Many a precious friendship, many a priceless love, may have been saved in this way—who knows? But this is sentiment. For good or for evil, the dominion of the quill pen is over, and the steel pen now reigns paramount. Let us not disparage the powers that be!

When the metallic pen first came into being, it is hard to say. Mr Bohn, the publisher, is in possession of a brass one, well made and serviceable, which is at least fifty or sixty years old. It is certain that steel and other metallic pens were occasionally made long before they came into general use, but they were too stiff and hard to find much favour. When, in 1830, Mr Perry bethought him of piercing apertures between the shoulder and point, in order to secure pliancy, an important step was taken in the development of the metallic pen; the true principle of its construction was then determined, and succeeding improvements have had reference only to details. The variety of the pens which are now manufactured is immense: there are hard nibs and soft nibs, nibs that will make a mark as broad as a printer's rule,

and others that will scratch only a fine hair-stroke. There are thin sword-bladed pens—pens with strong dromedary backs—pens with spines as supple as an acrobat's—ornate pens, twisted, crescent-like, or hydra-headed—and pens of dainty shape and burnished hue, for the use of those sweet souls who write

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring east.

As a rule, the pens of fantastic form are to be avoided; the most workmanlike nibs being generally those which have the least show about them. For those who write much, the round-barrelled *magnum bonum* is probably the most serviceable; but of course that is a matter of taste.

One of the latest novelties in the way of pens is one which was shewn in the Great Exhibition by an Austrian, who described its virtues in the following piece of English composition: 'This new pen dispenses with standink, being that you can write eight or ten hours consecutively, if you make your pen ready as follows: Take a small piece of paper, put it round the lowest part of the pen; take off the cork, and fill the pipe with ink; cork it hermetically, and clean the pen. If you like to make a fine, middle, or big writing, lean the sucker so hardly that it wants.' This invention is a modification of the ordinary music pen—a hollow tube, filled with ink, with a wire projecting at the narrow end, like the lead of a pencil-case, which when pressed on the paper, releases a drop of ink just sufficient to make the head of a crotchet or quaver.

What is the best material for a pen, is still an unsettled question. Steel, brass, gold, and glass have all been tried. Steel is the most popular, but its defect is that it corrodes so soon. Various contrivances have been employed to remedy this; pens have been galvanised on Davy's plan for protecting ships' copper, but with doubtful effect. Gutta-percha washings have also been applied, so as to give the steel a protecting coat of that substance. Were it not for its costliness, gold would, no doubt, be the most suitable, because the most durable material.

The manufacture of a pen is a striking instance of the subdivision of labour. If we would see the manifold processes through which this simple little instrument has to pass before it becomes marketable, we must go to Birmingham, the 'toy-shop of Europe,' which is always begrimed with smoke, odorous with japan furnaces and acid troughs, and frantically occupied with brass-founding, gun-making, and electro-plating.

Entering a huge pile of red brick buildings, known as the Buckingham Street Works (Messrs Hincks and Wells), we first visit the storehouse, in which sheets of the best Sheffield steel are piled up layer above layer. In adjoining chambers, these sheets are cut into lengths varying from one to five inches, are cleansed by being bathed in vats of warm oil of vitriol, and are then reduced to the required thickness by being passed between the heavy cylinders of the rolling-machine, which receives the steel in a dull, heavy, brittle condition, and ejects it soft, thin, elastic, and polished like a mirror. The power of these rolling-mills may be imagined from the fact, that very often a sheet of steel is drawn out to four times its original length. We follow the metal into the cutting-out room, a long gallery, where a number of neatly dressed, comely girls are seated in rows, each before a clicking hand-press. The metal ribbon, hot from the rolling-press, is submitted by the girls to the action of the steady-going punches before them. Every time the die descends, a couple of pieces of pen-shaped steel (blanks) are stamped out, the dexterity of the worker being shewn in the number of these which she can get out of one length of metal. A quick hand can produce over 30,000 'blanks' in ten

hours. The punches of course vary in shape. A large chest, standing in a corner of the room, contains thousands of different dies, sunk in every conceivable form, to suit the changeable taste of the public. The perforated lengths of steel are all sent back to Sheffield to be recast, so that there may be no waste. The piercing and marking of the pens are performed in a similar way, by girls working hand stamping-machines. The object of the piercing is to render the nibs soft and flexible, and this is variously effected by round, oval, square, or oblong apertures. In order to soften the blanks for marking, they are annealed in the furnace, being first, however, packed in iron shells hermetically sealed, in order to prevent injury to the delicate surface and edge of the pen, through oxidation or scaling.

The distinctive marks in this manufactory number upwards of 7000, and consist of arms, designs, names, or initials, according to the fancy of customers. Raising is the next process. The pens have during the previous stages been quite flat, but they are made to assume a semicircular shape by being pressed into grooves by convex tools. As they are still very soft, hardening is necessary, and this is effected by the same operation as the annealing, with this difference, that on being withdrawn from the furnace the pens are not allowed to cool slowly, but are suddenly plunged into a tank of cold oil. When removed from this bath, they are as hard and brittle as glass. Then comes the tempering. As we enter the room in which this is accomplished, we seem to hear the noise of a heavy storm of hail rattling on a skylight. We soon discover that the sound proceeds from a host of huge tin canisters revolving on cylinders over a brisk fire. Within these, the hardened pens are being roasted into a better temper. Their complexion gradually changes during this operation from a dull gray hue to a pale yellowish tint, then to a bronze, and lastly to a dullish blue, which indicates the 'spring temperature' believed to be most suitable for the pen. After being well scoured, the pens are ground. If you examine a steel pen, you will notice that it is ground on the back, either across or lengthwise, or both ways, near the centre, and towards the point. This is absolutely necessary, in order to insure due flexibility, and is a very slow and critical operation. On the nicety with which the grinding is managed depends, in a great measure, the quality of the article. The slitting is done by means of the useful hand-presses, and then the testing is proceeded with. At a long table sit several girls, each equipped with a small flat piece of bone attached to her right thumb, and with a heap of pens before her. Picking up the pens one by one with wonderful rapidity, the tester presses the nibs upon the piece of bone, and ascertains in an instant whether they are perfect or defective. According to the verdict passed upon them, they are consigned to one of two baskets. Ordinarily, a pen is condemned for being irregularly slit or pierced, and if one nib exceeds the other by so much as a hairbreadth in thickness, it is at once rejected. After being bronzed and varnished, the pen is fit for sale, and is either packed in little pasteboard boxes, or stitched on card. Before this ultimate stage is reached, however, the pen has, as we have seen, undergone no fewer than fifteen processes.

About 700 hands are kept constantly at work in this factory, and some 187,000,000 pens are annually produced. Most of the hands are paid according to the amount of work they accomplish. Each girl, for instance, receives with every basketful of pens a card on which the quantity is recorded; and when she has done the marking, or raising, or splitting, or whatever is required, the overseer again weighs the pens, and marks the result on the card. The wages are calculated from these cards. Among the friendly associations connected with the establishment is a

fund for the relief of any who fall sick, and another fund to which the girls subscribe each a few pence weekly, whereby they become entitled to draw from the lottery a ticket for some article of dress.

BEAR-HUNTING.

SAM SLICK remarks in the *Clockmaker*, that if you ask a fisherman suddenly, 'How many fins has a cod at a word?' it is almost a certainty he cannot tell you. I am quite sure that not one out of fifty frequenters of our zoological gardens could tell you if they were asked, 'Has a bear got a tail?' Having hunted, killed, skinned, and assisted in eating a great number of our black bears in Texas, I am in a position to state that they have tails, though very short ones.

Why is it that doubts are always cast upon hunters' stories? The unbelievers are stay-at-homes, men who have passed their lives in London drawing-rooms, and not in the wilderness; yet they feel quite competent to sneer at any tale a son of the forest may be led into telling. Gordon Cumming's adventures were not believed until Dr Livingstone proved that he had heard most of them from the camp-followers of the hunter, and that they were perfectly correct. Du Chaillu, who has brought home gorilla-skins in such abundance as prove that he must have either killed them himself, or else been pretty close to where they were shot, is said to have 'thrown the hatchet' fearfully, by people who would think of a thousand things before thinking of trusting themselves in equatorial Africa.

Probably Gerard's lion-stories, although vouched for by his comrades, will be said to have no truth in them. The fact is, great latitude should be given to hunters' accounts; belief should only stop at the impossible, not the improbable. In the fourteen years of a hunter's life which I passed in the wilds of Texas, I met with many strange adventures, which, although I know to be true, still I should hesitate to relate, so improbable would they appear to untravelled hearers; and yet, round the camp-fire on a far-west prairie, I should readily speak of them to a circle of trappers and leather-stockings, confident that their own experience would confirm my assertions.

There is what an old hunter would call 'a right smart chance of bar' in the forests of the south-west, though the numbers vary from their rambling habits, and from the failure or abundance of mast in certain districts. Thus in some years the mast perhaps will fail altogether, or partially, on the Colorado River, and yet be very plentiful on the neighbouring Brazos; then the bears migrate, led by instinct, to the banks of the latter stream. It is those seasons when there is a general failure through the country of acorns, nuts, and other fruits, that are most fatal to Cuffee, for then, made bold by hunger, he invades the cornfields, where the havoc he commits is soon discovered; and various are the methods employed to bring him to account for his larceny. As he always comes over the fence at one spot, for he is a creature of habit, until he has been disturbed or frightened away, he frequently falls a victim to an old musket, the barrel of which is half filled with slugs: to the trigger of it a string is attached: and this passed round a stick set behind the stock of the gun, is for Bruin to stumble against, who thus commits unintentional suicide. Some of the negroes on the plantations are very expert in setting these guns.

Very often a planter, whose fields have been ravaged in this way, will inform his neighbours that on a particular day he means to have a bear-hunt, and they are invited to meet at his house, an hour before daylight, bringing with them all the mongrels, curs, and hounds, that they can individually muster. A substantial backwoods breakfast discussed, the main

featur
bread,
and al
mornin
the w
The v
of imp
war-h
them
busine
of the
one or
or two
nothin
headl
with t
When
entere
own th
are ch
that w
hunter
replac
genera
some
yards
tion to
some
sits on
come
the de
invitin
hunter
mount
best ho
quarry
when
his be
recess
boos b
in his
follow
ride th
the hot
often
Clumsy
and can
Occa
climbs
pressed
and pi
This i
under
arrive,
him. 's
soon b
the bu
the gar
two, th
the pla
field, t
should
the be
a bear
instant
'before
those v
valour,
jump i
away
safety.
case, a
having
Bear
althoug
one in
make a
a pleas

features of which are usually venison-steaks, hot corn-bread, and coffee, the whisky-flask is handed round, and all having taken a 'smile,' merely to prevent the morning air from injuring them, 'boot and saddle' is the word, and each, gun in hand, mounts his horse. The very dogs on such an occasion feel that something of importance is to be done, and burying their canine war-hatchets, forget to have a free fight amongst themselves, reserving their powers for the tough business instinct warns them is at hand. The order of the day is usually this: There is generally some one or two in the party who have an old steady dog or two called 'start-dogs,' broken exclusively to run nothing but bear. These ride in front round the headlands of the field, the rest of the party keeping with the main pack, a hundred yards or so in the rear. When the leaders come to where a bear has either entered or left the field, the 'start-dogs' immediately own the scent, and open on the trail; the main pack are cheered on, and then comes a burst of dog-music that would do a cross countryman's heart good. The hunters throw down the fence-rails, which are easily replaced, and pass out. Sometimes the bear's den, generally an old tree-top that has been snapped off in some gale, is not more than two or three hundred yards from the fence, a bear having a decided objection to residing very far from his feeding-ground. On some occasions, he is surprised in his hold, where he sits on his hams with quite a Fitz-James 'come one, come all' expression on his countenance, and regards the dogs with what they consider a by no means inviting manner. Then comes the excited rush of the hunters, who, hearing the baying of the pack, dismount; and each hurries through the cane or brush as best he may, to get the first shot. At other times, the quarry has a shrewd guess as to what is in the wind when he first hears the cry of the hounds, and puts his best leg first to get as far into the impenetrable recesses of the cane-brake as possible; the stout bamboos bend like rye-grass before his weight, and close in his rear, making it very difficult for the dogs to follow, and impossible for the hunters, who have to ride the best way they can, guided by the yelling of the hounds. I have known a bear get clear away very often owing to the impassable nature of the jungle. Clumsy as the beast looks, he is by no means inactive, and can travel very fast.

Occasionally, when very fat, he 'trees,' that is, climbs a tree, at once, even when not particularly pressed by his foes; at other times, he is so bullied and pinched by them, that he is forced to ascend. This is always a fatal step, as the dogs remain under the tree and bay him until some of the hunters arrive, when a well-placed ball generally finishes him. The shot, the death-note sounded on a horn, soon bring up the stragglers of the hunt, when, if the burst has not been too severe or lasted too long, the game is left to be disembowelled by a negro or two, then placed on a mule, and borne in triumph to the plantation, the sportsmen starting back to the field, to see whether another bear has visited it. I should here mention that very savage dogs are not the best for this sport; a bull-dog, who would seize a bear and hang on to him, would come to grief instantly; he would be killed, as they say out west, 'before he knew what hurt him.' The best dogs are those with whom discretion is the better part of valour, curs who will watch their opportunity, and jump in, giving the bear a sharp pinch, and bound away again, to enjoy their little practical joke in safety. In wild cattle-hunting, the reverse is the case, and I have frequently owed my life to my having had severe dogs.

Bears are never stalked in the same way as deer, although occasionally the 'still hunter' comes across one in the woods; it will be as well, then, for him to make a sure shot, for a wounded bear is by no means a pleasant antagonist.

It is not at all an unusual occurrence in the backwoods to hear, towards evening, or early in the morning, the screams of a pig in mortal agony. The planter, overseer, or hunter who proceeds to the spot will find probably either a bear, a panther, or leopard cat making free with the pork; and if he cannot then obtain a good shot, the best thing he can do is to return to the plantation, get all the dogs he can collect, and returning to the dead porker, put his pack on the trail of the murderer, who, unwilling to leave his prey, generally trees at once, and it very seldom happens that the guilty animal escapes.

The first bear I ever shot I killed in Brazos County, Texas. I was in search of wild-turkeys; and just as I had disengaged myself from a thicket of rattan vines, I heard a noise at the top of a large tree, the head of which had been blown off, and up it a large sour winter grape-vine had climbed, the fruit of which hung ripe, and in great profusion. The noise I heard was made by a bear, who had ascended the tree to feast upon the grapes, and who had discovered my arrival about the same time that I first saw him. He immediately began his descent on the opposite side to that on which I was, keeping the trunk of the tree very carefully between himself and my gun; and as he came down, at about every two feet, he kept poking his head round, first on one side, then on the other, to see my position, as well as what I was doing. I waited quietly for him till he had reached within about six feet of the ground, holding the gun to my shoulder, ready to fire on the side where I next expected to see his head appear. Sure enough, as I expected, round came his brown muzzle, and, at the same instant, twelve large buck-shot from my right-hand barrel cut half his neck away, severing the jugular vein, from which jets of blood came half as thick as my wrist. My poor pointer-bitch, Rose, who had been away on the scent of some turkeys, had returned just about the time I fired, and threw herself at once upon what she considered was an enormous turkey, but a convulsive blow of the dying brute sent her flying some ten or twelve feet. I shall never forget the expression on her face as she picked herself up, for fortunately she was not much hurt. As she approached very cautiously, she winded the bear, and set up all the hair on her back, uttering sharp barks; then she would look up into my face, and, wagging her tail, whine, asking, as plain as if she had spoken: 'What on earth have we got here?' It was the first bear she had ever seen, as, indeed, it was the first wild one I had seen either.

Owing to the open and warm winters, the bears do not 'house' themselves in the winter, as they do in Canada and the northern states, although they shut themselves up, when the cold 'northerns' prevail, for a week or two. It is during the winter that the honey-stores of the wild-bees, and the hogs that roam the forest, suffer most, as there is then very little other food in the woods for them, except the grubs they find in the old decaying fallen trees.

As the planters often make prodigious crops of corn, they are sometimes obliged, for want of room, to put it for temporary accommodation into pens, made of rails, and roughly thatched, in the fields. These corn-cribs are frequently visited in the night by the bears, and many a vigil have I kept for them, rendered doubly long, as I could not permit myself the consolation of my pipe, the smell of which would have made all my trouble useless.

There are many good points about the southern bruins. They are quiet, harmless fellows, unless attacked and wounded; they then fight any odds bravely. The maternal instincts are very strong in the females, who will wage war to the last gasp in defence of their little ones. The old male is never seen with the female when she has cubs, probably from his having the same dislike to juveniles which some men have; he consequently leaves all the care

and trouble of his family to his wife, like a bear as he is. They seem to think that there is luck in odd numbers, too, for three cubs will be oftener found with an old she-bear than any other number.

I was once hunting for a sugar-plantation on Caney Creek, in Matagorda County. The summer had been excessively dry; all the ponds had dried up, and so had the small streams, except here and there where there were deep holes. I had been accustomed both night and morning to seek a large and deep lake which lay in the forest about a mile and a half from the house. To this lagoon, wild animals of all descriptions resorted for water, and I had on each visit been able to secure two or three deer, varied occasionally by a wild cow or hog. It was on the 3d of September 1858 that I rode out to this place one afternoon about four o'clock, and having tied my horse where he could not be observed, repaired to my usual place of concealment to watch for game. The first animal that came within rifle-range was an old Mexican boar, but as he was worthless for meat, I allowed him to drink and depart in peace. Presently, the fluttering of some robins, as they are called, a kind of migratory thrush, shewed from their hurry and clucking cry that some intruder had disturbed them. I had not long to wait to see what it was, for out rolled, with their peculiarly droll waddle, an old bear with her three, five, or six months' old cubs. They were about fifty yards from me, and right to windward, and whilst they were drinking, I stretched myself flat on my stomach, resting the rifle in the fork of a peg I had set in the ground, and from which I had made many dead shots previously, and prepared to fire whenever the old lady should turn her head to me, so that I could get a fair shot at her eye. It may seem to those not acquainted with the subject, that the eye of a bear is a very small mark to shoot at, and so it is; but the orifice in the skull is very large, although the eye itself is small—a ball, therefore, placed in or near the eye is certain, if fired from the front, to find the brain. She soon turned her head; and taking a very careful aim, I shot her through the corner of her right eye—the bullet, as I afterwards discovered, passing out at the base of the left ear. She fell without a struggle, not even a kick of her legs. The cubs did not seem to be aware that anything particular had happened, as I had hoped would be the case if I made a good shot; and I proceeded to load so that I could dispose of them at my leisure. Those who have never loaded a rifle when lying flat on the ground can form no idea of its difficulty; I have very often had to do this, and speak from experience. I succeeded in killing the three cubs, and then rode into the plantation, to have a cane cart and mules sent out to bring in the game. The house was full of company—several young ladies staying there from neighbouring plantations, for a dance which was to be given the next evening. Proud enough I was as I rode in at the head of my prizes, for even in Texas it is not often any one has the luck to bag four bears of an evening. The mother was not in very prime condition, but the cubs were perfect lumps of grease, and would have delighted Poll Sweedlepipe's father or Mr Finch. Many bottles were filled with bears-oil for the ladies' hair; and much rejoicing was heard in the negro cabins at the prospect of a good feast of fat 'bar-meat,' for next to 'possum, the negroes love that delicacy. For myself, I know of no better food; it is a cross between very nice pork and tender beef, some of it being as white as a chicken, whilst other portions are dark in colour when cooked. The paws and liver are esteemed the daintiest tit-bits.

It is now many years since, that a party of us were encamped on the edge of a cane-brake for the purpose of bear-hunting. The leader of our party was an old gaunt trapper, with a head as smooth, as polished, and as destitute of hair as a pumpkin, though his

moustache and beard were of enormous dimensions, which gave him, when without his 'coon-skin cap, a very singular appearance. One of the party at last asked him what had made him lose all the hair from the scalp. 'Boys,' said he, 'look a hyar: I somehow guess it wur an old bar I shot once in the spring of the year, and I put some on her ile on this child's bar. I reckon she wur a-shedding her coat, and her grease wur no account, for arter I'd bin a-using on it, my har began to spill out, and I lost every dog and bristle on it. It mout hev bin that, and then, agin, it moutn't. Boys, just hand us the whisky-gourd; it most allus makes me dry when I thinks on it. I'll turn in now, for we'll hev to be stirring pretty peart in the morning.'

'Comrades, good-night!' the trapper 'threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest where'er
The hour arrived, no matter where.'

The following anecdote goes far to prove that a bear has only room for one idea at a time in his head. A party of overland emigrants on their way across the plains from St Louis, Missouri, to El Paso, and thence to California, had arrived somewhere on the Green River. From this train a hunter had strayed off in search of game, and came upon a bear in a creek bottom, who was up a persimmon-tree loaded with ripe fruit, which he was busily eating, whilst a wild-boar beneath was revelling in the over-ripe dainties which fell in showers from the bear's clumsy operations in the tree. It was evident from the glances bruin threw below from time to time that he was jealous of the hog, and by no means relished playing provider even involuntarily for the other; and he often expressed his disapprobation by short and savage growls, which the boar only answered by an occasional satisfied grunt. The hunter noted all these signs, and saw that very little more was necessary to make Cuffee's wrath boil over, which he would be certain to vent upon the pig; he therefore drew the buck-shot from one barrel of his gun, and substituted for it a load of dust-shot, with which, from his ambush, he stung the bear pretty severely. Down came the bear instantly to chastise the boar for adding this injury to insult, fully convinced that the smart he suffered was caused by the pig. The battle was a sharp one, though not of long duration, and bruin speedily killed his antagonist, but not before the hog had inflicted a mortal wound, by gashing open with his sharp tusks the belly of his opponent, who speedily bled to death. 'Thus,' said the hunter with pardonable vanity, 'I killed a bear and a wild-boar with a charge of No. 7 shot, which I believe nobody else has ever done.'

CHEERFULNESS.

THE storm but makes its handmaid, Calm, more sweet;
The hours of gloom the slow succeeding light
Richer appear; fair Dawn that follows Night,
With glory-beaming face and golden feet,
Seems doubly precious if the tempest beat
Against our frail bark in the murky hours;
And far more fragrant are the nodding flowers,
After the rain-cloud drops its water-sheet.
Then let us not complain nor murmur if
We storms encounter on our devious track;
There is an antidote for every grief,
And light behind the cloud however black;
There's far more shining gold than base alloy,
And far less cause for sorrow than for joy.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.